

well alone. Children do not do well in orphanages, no matter how well they are run. Children do not want to grow up in group homes of which we have thousands of children in our own country in group homes.

Actually, children want to grow up in families. This may be a startling concept for some but not for us. That is why we advocate for child welfare policies that at its beginning, middle, and end advocate the basic fundamental truth that children are best raised in a family with one responsible parent if not two. We do not think there should be any argument about that. So we are puzzled as to why we have so many difficulties sometimes explaining that in situations like Haiti or in America or in places in Africa or Central America around the world. There are so many barriers to adoption. It breaks our hearts. It just breaks our heart. One barrier after another.

We think this is quite simple. We think these barriers have to come down, and we are determined to pull this out.

I want to give some numbers to you that will be startling to you because they are to me.

In America we have 320 million people approximately. We have 100,000 orphans. There are a lot of orphans in our own country. They are invisible to people. We try to bring their pictures to the Senate floor sometimes and tell people there are 100,000 magnificent children of all races, shapes, and sizes who are in need of a family right here at home. We do our best to promote domestic adoptions and have been doing a much better job.

Americans adopt about 120,000 children a year, mostly from our foster care system, some infant adoptions in America, and, happily, 20,000 international adoptions. But when you hear this number, you would fall down if you were not sitting down. Haiti has 9 million people. Remember, we have 320 million, they have 9 million. They had 380,000 orphans before the earthquake struck.

I am going to repeat that. They have 9 million people. They had 380,000 orphans before the earthquake struck. We cannot begin to estimate how many orphans there are today, but I promise you that number has at least doubled.

Now, I am not going to be part of a system that says, with those numbers and that truth, our job is to find those children, dust them off, fix their broken limbs, heal them physically, try to help them emotionally, and then stick them in orphanages for the rest of their lives. I am not going to support that. I am hoping the Members on this side will not support that either.

That is what we have had for the last 50 and 100 years in terms of policy all around the world, even in Haiti. We cannot have that anymore. The international treaty that we have all been a part of trying to help says this: It says every child should stay in the family to which they were born with the parents

who brought them into the world. When they are separated from those parents, through death or disease or famine or war, they are then to be placed, as quickly as possible, with a relative who is willing and able to raise them.

If I passed away, the Presiding Officer knows my sisters or one of my brothers would step in. If my husband and I died, my sisters and brothers would step in to raise our children. That is normally what is done all over the world. It is no surprise. But when there is no family member to take in a child, then the treaty says you shall find a home for that child somewhere in their country, in their community, which makes sense. Culturally, that makes sense.

While I am a big believer in cross-cultural adoption and biracial adoption—I am a huge supporter of that—but I understand we want to try to place children as close to their initial beginnings as possible. When that becomes impossible, it is our job to find them a home somewhere else in the human family because, after all, we are one human family. If anybody would like to come to the Senate floor to disagree with me, I look forward to debating that with them. I do not think I will find any arguments here among Senators, from the very conservative to the most liberal. It is just a basic moral tenet that we are one human family. So it makes me so angry when I see governments, sometimes even our own, sometimes even our own bureaucracy, sometimes even our own embassy fighting that concept. They throw up their hands and say: We just cannot. It is overwhelming. We cannot find a way to do it. Every excuse in the world to keep these children from the one thing they need most, which is a parent, someone to love them.

If anyone thinks that just feeding children and clothing children is what God is calling us to do, I would beg to differ. Yes, we have to keep them alive. Yes, we have to give them care. But what most importantly little human beings need are bigger human beings to raise them. If they do not get that, they end up not growing up in a strong way. They end up in our prison systems. They end up in homes. They end up sick. Not that every child that is in a family in America, even with the most loving parents ends up always wonderfully, but they most certainly have a better opportunity.

So I am just putting a line in the sand here and saying to my colleagues that I am proud of the 40 Members of Congress, House and Senate Members, who sent a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who all of her life has been a leader on this subject. We are so grateful she is there as Secretary of State. We sent this letter to Secretary Napolitano. I am going to put this letter in the RECORD.

I am pleased the letter we just sent 3 days ago has already been responded to. The Departments have issued hu-

manitarian parole for the orphans who were in the process of being adopted, and there were a couple hundred. Parents here have been desperate. They have already been matched with their children. They have pictures of their children. They were in the process of adopting those children. You can imagine how desperate they are. That process is underway.

We are going to continue to press to make sure that not just the green light was held up, but that our government at every level, from Defense to Homeland Security to Transportation, is doing everything they can to execute the swift and safe removal of these children in Haiti to American families who will nurture them and support them.

Then the next step—I see my colleague from Utah here—I am going to end in just a moment. The next step will be to work with a broad coalition of faith-based communities in our country and around the world, with private sector corporations, large and small, with individual Americans who want to contribute and be a part of this effort.

I intend to lead and set up a framework so that thousands and thousands, hundreds of thousands of orphans in Haiti can find the family to which they were born. We are going to try very hard. If not, a relative in Haiti, if not someplace in Haiti for them to live in the joy and comfort of a supporting and loving family, and then if not here, then somewhere in the world where these hundreds of thousands of orphans—and I hope not to say this, but potentially 1 million; but let's hope that number does not ever reach this—find families.

This is not going to happen in the next 24 hours or 48 hours. But with our concerted help and vision and leadership, it can happen not just in Haiti but around the world, including right here in the United States of America.

So I want to thank my colleague, JIM INHOFE, who is the cochair of the Adoption Caucus. I want to thank the Members of the Senate and the House, particularly JIM COOPER, MICHELE BACHMANN, and others who have stepped up so quickly.

We will be speaking on this floor quite a few times in the future as we get updates about this issue. I thank Americans for the outpouring of support for children in Haiti, for all people of Haiti, but particularly the children and particularly the orphans who need our help.

I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

#### INCREASING THE STATUTORY LIMIT ON THE PUBLIC DEBT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the